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# CHRISTIANS · IN · SCIENCE

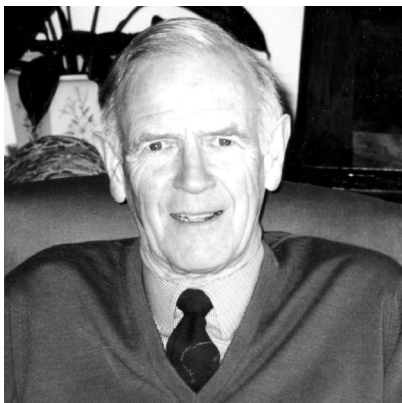
## PréCiS

### Sept 2005

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no. 32

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## An interview with Oliver Barclay

Dr Oliver Barclay is the former General Secretary of the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF). He was largely responsible for setting up the Research Scientists Christian Fellowship, which subsequently became CiS, and was Secretary for over thirty years. He now lives in Leicester with his wife Daisy.

### What have you been doing until now?

I started off studying zoology at Cambridge. After my PhD I spent a year in teaching and research, before taking up a two-year position at UCCF. I stayed there for the next 35 years! For nearly all the time that I was on the staff of UCCF, I was also the Secretary of CiS, and I had called the first conference in 1944. I also edited *Science and Christian Belief* at its start. Since retiring, I have been speaking and writing a good deal.

### What do you do for fun?

I enjoy spending time with family, writing, and gardening. I have four children and eleven grandchildren, some of whom live nearby. I also keep in touch with many former UCCF staff and student contacts. I do not often speak at meetings now since I think too slowly to answer questions well.

### Who have been the most important role models in your life?

I became a Christian through the OMF missionary, and later bishop, Frank Houghton. He was a lifelong inspiration. Professor Hooykaas and Donald MacKay informed much of my thinking on science and faith. I also learned a lot from Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, whose church I sometimes used to attend. My friendship with John Stott, who was my contemporary at Cambridge, has been an important influence and a great help.

### What challenges have you come across as a Christian and a scientist?

The whole gamut really. I wrestled with evolution early on. I also considered the wider relationship

between science and faith as a whole, and have edited journals and booklets on the topic. Early on, the debate was very different from today and we tried to move it from details of “science and the Bible” to more basic conflicts such as the status of scientific laws and miracles. On evolution the conclusion I came to was that if evolution was a scientific process, then that was no problem. If it is a philosophy however, that is a big problem, and since it is often used as a stick to beat Christians with, that basic “naturalism” has to be confronted. The question of biblical interpretation is usually in the background.

In addition to my other work constantly visiting CUs, I was always reading on one or other aspect

*Continued on page 2*

### CONFERENCE 2005 REMINDER

The London Day Conference is on October 1st.

Title: ‘*A Christian Framework for Sustainability*’. It is being held jointly with the Victoria Institute and The John Ray Initiative.

A bookstall will be available, with many relevant and discounted books.

For those of you who have not yet booked a further brochure/booking form is enclosed. Time is passing so return your form NOW!

Bursaries are available for those who find the cost a problem. Further details will be sent later to those who book.

“An interview with Oliver Barclay”, continued:

of apologetics or Christian doctrine, not just science and faith, with a view to writing something at the end. This helped me to keep up to date, even when I was busy.

### **How has your faith helped you as a scientist, or vice versa?**

My science has not really helped my faith, apart from helping me to delight greatly in and marvel at the wonders of God’s creation. My faith did help me as a scientist though. It motivated me to work with integrity and honesty, and to pursue research that would be useful. The main focus of my research was the mechanics of animal movement and human walking. This was partly motivated by the fact that a better understanding of these movements would allow the development of more effective artificial limbs. My ultimate aim while I was studying was to teach at a university in the third-world, especially China, but the war stopped that, and I was diverted to student work, which I have loved. My scientific background proved very useful there.

### **What science-faith books have you most enjoyed/found most helpful?**

Initially I was much helped by a long forgotten book “Christ and the world of thought” by Daniel Lamont who was an evangelical Professor of Apologetics in Edinburgh. Donald MacKay’s writing has been the most helpful, particularly “The Clockwork Image – a Christian perspective on science” (IVP, 1974, reprinted 1997). He was the leading academic thinker in CiS for a long time. Until he became involved, thinking had often revolved around questions over events such as Joshua’s long day. He brought a strong reformed theological background, and allowed us to get to the fundamental issues.

### **What do you think is the main role of CiS?**

Basically, it is to establish the credibility of a Christian view of science, and show that science and faith are harmoniously compatible, instead of an either/or situation. This is especially important for new Christians. It aims to deal with the big apologetic questions, and addresses the people who use science as an excuse for not believing.

CiS is different to other professional groups in some ways, because it is more concerned with answering questions raised by non-Christians. In helping ourselves to think more clearly on these issues, we can be better equipped for the questions that we are asked, and better able to help towards an integrated Christian outlook.

## **Committee comings and goings**

This summer, Diana Briggs left the CiS committee after six years of service. This has been good timing, as the group in Oxford that she was involved in setting up last Autumn has really taken off, and even led to a day conference, which will be held in October. Thank you for all your work over the years, and for getting the Oxford group off the ground.

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## **Issues of Life and Death**

**Saturday 29th October,  
St Andrews Church, Oxford.**

A day conference with workshops, to explore the issues and implications of abortion, stem cell research, human cloning, euthanasia and assisted dying.

Speakers:

*Martin Foley* – Abortion: myths and reality.

*Patrick Dixon* – Brave New World: can ethics keep pace with science in the 21st century.

*Robin Gill* – Euthanasia and assisted dying: ethics and dignity at the end of life.

For more details and application form, contact Lynda Rose (lyndarose2000@yahoo.co.uk).

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## **The Ethics of Cloning Film Festival**

A three-day biomedical ethics film festival will be taking place in Edinburgh between the 11th –13th of November 2005 relating to the ethics of therapeutic and reproductive human cloning.

During this event, short films, documentaries and drama-fiction films will be presented, during the afternoons and evenings, all supporting reflection on the subject of human cloning. At the end of each film a discussion with a panel of 3-4 invited biomedical and bioethics experts in addition to politicians will be taking place. This will encourage and support participating members of the general public to engage in an informed and useful discussion, with one another and the experts, concerning some of the important ethical issues being raised by the films. All members of the public are warmly invited to attend.

The film festival is organised in partnership with (1) the Scottish Council on Human Bioethics, (2) the Edinburgh Filmhouse (venue for the event), (3) the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland Branch of the British Association for the Advancement of Science and (4) the ESRC Genomics Policy and Research Forum.

## Can we believe Genesis today?

Ernest Lucas' book "Can we believe Genesis today" has recently been reprinted by IVP. This is the third printing of this popular book.



Genesis still remains a challenge to many Christians today, and every scientist must tackle the question of how to interpret the creation passages. Sometimes it takes a colleague or friend to ask difficult questions before we realise that we haven't though through these issues properly ourselves.

"Many of us are confused about what Genesis tells us, and how (and why) to approach its ancient story of the origin of the world and mankind. We are usually equally confused about what Genesis is, and what it can and cannot tell us. If we are willing to look for truth and consider other ways of seeing the world, we can emerge from the fog. This book gives a fresh and important approach to some of the deep down questions which trouble us most about where we came from, and why we are here."

Do you know anyone in your church or at work who is struggling with these issues?

This book is available from CiS at £5.00, including postage (contact John Bausor at [jandk.bausor@clara.net](mailto:jandk.bausor@clara.net) or 16 Walter Road, Wokingham, Berks. RG41 3JA)

### Submissions for November PréCiS

Items for the next PréCiS should be submitted to Caroline Berry at [cberry@pncl.co.uk](mailto:cberry@pncl.co.uk) or 4 Sackville Close, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3QD by **20th October**.

### Change of address? Graduated? New e-mail?

If any of your details have changed, please contact Tom Moffat at:

The Manse, Culross, Dunfermline, Fife,  
KY12 8JD. Tel. 01383 880 231  
e-mail: [subscriptions@cis.org.uk](mailto:subscriptions@cis.org.uk)

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS



I have just returned from CLAN gathering, the New Wine conference in St Andrews, where I was running the CiS stand. Being in a prime spot near the bookstall, I had the chance to chat to lots of people: scientists, students, teachers, ministers with a science background, and interested others. I was

challenged by the questions that people asked, particularly on evolution, and have come away with increased motivation to keep on reading! So many people were excited to find that CiS is there to help people think through issues in science. If you haven't let people at your church know about CiS yet, try taking along some of our materials - the leaflet "God and the Big Bang" is a particular favourite, and is now available in pdf form on the website.

I recently discovered that Scottish teachers have a chance to speak about their faith, with a more flexible curriculum, and subjects such as the Higher in "Religious and Moral Philosophical Studies". I've been asked to help with a workshop for students at a high school in Glasgow, and I'd encourage any of you in Scotland to make links with Christian teachers your local high school, as they are really keen to find good resources, and Christians with a science background, to help with this course.

Over the next few weeks I will be working on the new website, which we hope to launch in time for the new academic year. In September I will be giving a seminar, and representing CiS at the professional groups stand, at the UCCF training week for new Christian Union leaders in Shropshire. I'm also looking forward to the bioethics film festival in the festival capital, Edinburgh!

As always, feel free to write to me with your ideas and suggestions, particularly for the website. If I can help with setting up a CiS group, or visiting your local church or student group, let me know (contact details on page 1).

*Ruth Bancewicz*  
*CiS Development Officer*

## EDUCATION

From this edition onwards, each PreCiS will have an education column. We start by informing members of an exciting new development. Martin Rogers below describes the work of a science and religion project. Those members wishing to know more about this project will be pleased to know that Martin will be talking about this Education development at a joint CIS/Stapleford Centre conference, to be held at Christ Church, Herne Bay, near Canterbury, Kent, in April 2006.

*John Ling*

### **Science and Religion in Schools Project**

The purpose of the Science and Religion in Schools Project is to make a major impact on the teaching of issues concerning science and religion in schools. The object is to ensure that students are well informed and have a balanced view of the issues that arise when the claims of science are compared with those of the major world religions. The materials produced cover the age range 9-18.

The project started in 2002 and will be completed next year. All the materials are being written by teachers who are or have recently been in the classroom. Materials for teachers give enough background to enable them to be taught either by R.E. teachers or Science teachers. There are suggested lesson plans and reading matter and worksheets. Some teachers may use them as they stand, others will prefer their own style.

It is hoped that all the materials produced will be available by April 2006 in the form of a Guide and a CD ROM. Thanks to modern technology the estimated cost will be between £10 and £15 for the whole package. Meanwhile three sample units will be available on our website [www.srsp.net](http://www.srsp.net) and on a CD ROM in July or earlier, as will a new leaflet about our project. For further information contact [admin@srsp.net](mailto:admin@srsp.net).

*Martin Rogers*

Martin Rogers is the recently retired Director of the Farmington Institute, Oxford. Before that he taught Chemistry and then became a Headmaster..

## CiS Northern Conference 2006

The next Northern Conference will be held on **Sat 18th March**.

More details to follow. Contact: Tamzin Lafford at [conferencebookings@cis.org.uk](mailto:conferencebookings@cis.org.uk).

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### **Late night or early morning listening?**

CiS member Kate Distin could be heard on Radio 1 programme OneClick Open at 3am on July 28th, (available for downloading from the BBC website but only for the week following the live transmission). The programme involved philosophical discussion of questions sent in by listeners. One question concerned the existence of God and the other participants were surprised to find Kate willing to defend His reality and this discussion quite dominated the slot. This was an unexpected development, an exciting example of how God can work when we are willing to put our heads above the parapet.

Kate was invited to participate in the programme because she has recently written a book *The Selfish Meme* published by Cambridge University Press (ISBN 0521606276). Richard Dawkins initiated the term 'meme' for the cultural equivalent of a gene and Kate has explored the idea and believes it is a useful concept as culture may well evolve in the same way as do our physical attributes. Unlike Dawkins however she sees no incompatibility with human autonomy, creativity and spirituality. As is commonplace in science she says, these are just alternative levels of description and she challenges Dawkins claim that religion can be seen as a mental virus.

For more information on *The Selfish Meme* see [www.theseffishmeme.co.uk](http://www.theseffishmeme.co.uk).

Members who attended the CiS Birmingham conference in 1996 may remember Kate and her husband Keith's joint paper on Human Design Methods.



# CiS Members in Action

## Talks

**7th September**, Cafe Scientifique, BA Festival of Science, Dublin, '**Science Promise versus Science Reality**'. *John Bryant*

**16th-18th September**, Annual conference of the Alister Hardy Trust at Lampeter University, '**Revelation and Biological Evolution**'. *Denis Alexander*

**21st and 22nd September**, The Dundonald Church Fellowship in Wimbledon London, '**Genesis and Science**'. *Bob White*

**9th October**, Evening service at St Catharine's College Cambridge, '**Is Creation Credible? Genesis and Science**'. *Bob White*

**10th October**, Sherborne and District BA Young Scientists, '**Genes, Clones and Embryos**'. *John Bryant*

**19th October**, Met Office CU, Exeter. *John Bryant*

**20th October**, National Honey Show, London. '**Birds, Bees and Superweeds**'. *John Bryant*

**27th October**, The Exeter Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship, '**Teaching Genesis 1-11**'. *Ernest Lucas*

**30th October**, 7.00pm service at Exeter Network Church. Part of an outreach/apologetics series called '**Frequently asked questions**'. *John Bryant*

**Fri 18th November**, Outreach event '**Evolution. Is God extinct?**' *Bob White*

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**Denis Alexander** has recently participated in a panel discussion on 'Creation and Evolution' at the Bristol Festival of Ideas, and spoken at the Journalists' Fellowship programme in Cambridge, giving the opening seminar on 'The Historical Background to the Science-Religion Debate'. He also spoke at the C.S. Lewis Symposium in Cambridge on 'Truth and Beauty in Science'.

Together with CiS member **Mike Poole**, Denis also recently participated in an event at the House of Commons where Prof. Steve Jones spoke about Creationism and Intelligent Design and its perceived impact on the teaching of science in schools.

## Lectures by Colin Humphreys,

*Professor of Material Sciences, Cambridge University.*

Colin spoke on the **Miracles of Exodus** at the London conference in 2003 and has written a best selling book with the same title (ISBN 0826474292).

On **Thurs 15th September** he is leading a day on the topic in Wells for the continuing Ministerial Education Programme of the Church of England, Diocese of Bath and Wells.

On **Sat 17th September** he is speaking on Miracles to the Cambridge Society at Winchester.

And on **Tues 25th October** to the Leeds CiS group. Please remember him in your prayers as in our skeptical society this can be a contentious topic, even among Christians. For more information e-mail Colin at [colin.humphreys@msm.cam.ac.uk](mailto:colin.humphreys@msm.cam.ac.uk)

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At the end of July, CiS member **Sir John Houghton** testified at a hearing of the US Senate on the vexed topic of Climate Change. He was one of four senior scientists giving evidence, all four being well persuaded that there is an urgent need for effective action if this is to be brought under control. A good number of Senators attended (apparently more than is usual on such occasions), together with many (several hundred) members of the press and public. The Senators engaged in lively discussion and were clearly interested and concerned; the meeting went on for twice the scheduled time. Overall Sir John was encouraged by this opportunity to engage with influential members of the United States establishment.

For a full up date remember that Sir John is speaking at the London conference on October 1st.

## Books

**Introduction to Bioethics** by John Bryant, Linda Baggott la Velle and John Searle (Wiley, paperback at £24.95).

**Can we believe Genesis today?** By Ernest Lucas (reprinted, IVP. Available for £5 from CiS).

**Can we be sure about anything? Science, faith and postmodernism**, Edited by Denis Alexander (IVP, 12.99).

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Please let us know of any events that you are involved in over the next few months

# News from CiS local groups

## Nottingham

A discussion group now meets on the first Tuesday of even numbered months. The next meeting is on **4th October**, looking at James Lovelock and Gaia.

Anybody who is interested can phone Geoff Bagley on 0115 925 8801 or email [gbagley@ntlworld.com](mailto:gbagley@ntlworld.com).

## Oxford

**Mon, 17th October**, 7.30 pm, St Andrews Church. Professor Andrew Steane, Physics Department, Oxford University.

*'The Laws of Nature and Divine Providence:  
The God of the Whole, not the Gaps.'*

A widely-held view is that where once it seemed that God must be the explanation for things, science has shown that this is not required. Science seems to be saying there is no need to include God in any discussion of physical events. How do we know what to believe? Contact Diana Briggs ([diana.briggs@gmail.com](mailto:diana.briggs@gmail.com)) for details.

## Leeds

Launch meeting: **Tuesday October 25th**

Speaker:

*Professor Colin Humphreys FRS*  
(Dept of Materials Science & Metallurgy,  
University of Cambridge)

For more details, please contact Richard Dimery ([richard@dimery.com](mailto:richard@dimery.com)) or Rhoda Hawkins ([rhoda.hawkins@physics.org](mailto:rhoda.hawkins@physics.org)).

## Ireland

It is hoped to set up an Irish branch of Christians in Science. Arrangements are being made for an initial Saturday morning meeting,

provisionally on:

*Sat 26 November (10.00 am to lunch)  
at Bloomfield Presbyterian Church, Belfast.*

This might include one speaker from the physical sciences, one from the life sciences.

Further information is available from Martin Brown (122 Bryansburn Road, Bangor, County Down, BT20 3RG) who will circulate members in Ireland when there are more details.

## Edinburgh

The Edinburgh CiS group was launched on Wed 8th June at St Paul's and St Georges Church, with a talk

by Professor Wilson Poon (School of Physics, Edinburgh University) on "The Bible and Science: Some Fresh Vistas", followed by discussion, aided by coffee and fabulous cakes.

You can find out more in 'Sketches towards a theology of science', by the Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church (Grosvenor Essay 1, Poon W (ed), available at £2.50, ISBN 0 905573 64 1).

We will be meeting again in the Autumn.

Contact Ruth Bancewicz at 0781 687 3515 or Cathel Kerr at [clkerr@btopenworld.com](mailto:clkerr@btopenworld.com) for details.

## Cambridge

The CiS-St. Edmund's College series:

*'Does Science Make Secularisation Inevitable?'*  
Professor Rodney Stark (Baylor University, USA)

5.30 p.m. Wed, 16th Nov,  
Queen's Lecture Theatre, Emmanuel College

For more details go to

<http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/cis/>

## Forming Local Groups

There have always been local CiS groups meeting in various parts of the country who have organised activities for other CiS members and friends. Activities are as varied as the imagination and vision of the local organisers!

For example:

- o Coffee/meal/prayer with friends or colleagues
- o Informal discussion evenings
- o Focused study group
- o Termly open lectures
- o Organising a group to travel to a conference
- o A science evening/day in a local church

If you are interested in starting your own CiS local group, contact Ruth or Caroline (contact details on page 1) for a list of members in your area. You can also request a CiS speakers list.

A paper on forming local groups can be found at [http://cis.org.uk/starting\\_local\\_cis\\_group.htm](http://cis.org.uk/starting_local_cis_group.htm), or a paper copy can be sent on request.